

districts that govern the affiliate and charter schools in all 50 states. The purpose of the National Forensic League is to promote inter-scholastic debate, oratory, public speaking, and interpretation of literature by encouraging a spirit of fellowship and by conferring upon deserving candidates a worthy badge of distinction. The National Forensic League works to accomplish this mission by promoting debate and speech through a nation-wide network of competitive tournaments and by honoring students for their achievements. The culmination of the year is a National Speech and Debate Tournament in the month of June. This year's topic will be whether or not the U.S. government should reduce its authority to detain without charges or search without probable cause.

The Flower Mound High School speech and debate team has 25 students traveling during weekends from speech to debate tournaments. At Flower Mound High School, each member of the speech and debate team is guaranteed to compete in at least five rounds per year. If a student performs well, he or she can enter additional tournaments. Students are awarded a degree of merit for each round they compete in, which then gets accumulated by the team. Flower Mound was the 13th team nationwide with the most accumulated degrees of merit.

Today I congratulate the Flower Mound High School speech and debate team and Head Debate Coach, Eric Mears, on ranking 13th out of the top 50 speech and debate teams in the country. Their dedication and hard work in perpetuating intellectual debate, oratory and public speaking deserves the highest recognition and praise.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2862,
SCIENCE STATE, JUSTICE, COM-
MERCE, AND RELATED AGEN-
CIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. BART STUPAK

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 9, 2005

Mr. STUPAK. Madam Speaker, this week, the House of Representatives passed the conference report to H.R. 2862, the FY 2006 Science, State, Justice, and Commerce Appropriations bill on a vote of 397-19.

I voted for this conference report because it provides funding for important law enforcement agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Justice, and the Drug Enforcement Agency. However, I was reluctant to support this conference report during final passage because I was extremely disappointed and concerned that this legislation drastically cuts funds for the Community Oriented Policing Services program, or COPS program, and subsequently eliminates all federal funding for the hiring of police officers. The passage of this conference report has placed an undue burden on local law enforcement's ability to ensure the safety and security of our communities and our families.

H.R. 2862 contains only \$478 million in funding for COPS, which is \$120 million less than last year's funding level. When the House first considered H.R. 2862 on June 14, 2005, I supported an amendment offered by Con-

gressman OBEY to increase the COPS funding level to \$666 million. Unfortunately, the House chose to put our law enforcement and the safety of our street and communities at risk by rejecting the amendment.

This conference report contains only \$416 million for the Byrne Discretionary and Justice Assistance Grant Programs, also known as Byrne-JAG grants. This is \$386 million less than the FY '05 amount of \$792 million. Byrne-JAG grants provide vital funding for multi-jurisdictional drug task forces, anti-drug education programs, treatment programs, long-range corrections and sentencing strategy programs, anti-terrorism training programs, and for the enforcement of child abuse and neglect laws, and the improvement the criminal justice systems' response to domestic and family abuse. When the House first considered H.R. 2862, I offered a bipartisan amendment to increase Byrne-JAG grants funding, but unfortunately, my amendment failed to garner enough votes.

As a former Escanaba city police officer and Michigan State Trooper as well as co-chair of the Congressional Law Enforcement Caucus, I understand how much our local communities need and rely on COPS and Byrne-JAG grant program monies. Post-9/11, our Nation's public safety officers are faced with more challenges than ever before in performing their duties, and we must do everything in our power to support their effort. We should be providing public safety officers with the resources necessary to keep our communities safe from both terrorist threats and daily crime, and unfortunately this conference report short-changes these men and women who protect and serve our Nation.

COMMENDING EFFORTS OF
CROHN'S AND COLITIS FOUNDA-
TION OF AMERICA

HON. SUE W. KELLY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 10, 2005

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the efforts of the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America in fighting Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD). Today, the Foundation will visit Capitol Hill and ask for our support of H.R. 3616—The Inflammatory Bowel Disease Research Act.

Crohn's Disease and ulcerative colitis are chronic disorders of the gastrointestinal tract that afflict approximately 1.4 million Americans, 30 percent of whom are diagnosed in their childhood years. IBD represents a major cause of morbidity from digestive illness and has a devastating impact on both patients and families. The cause is unknown, and there is no medical cure.

I urge my colleagues to cosponsor the bipartisan Inflammatory Bowel Disease Research Act that I'm sponsoring with the gentleman from Illinois, JESSE JACKSON, Jr. The IBD Research Act builds upon legislation we sponsored last Congress, which garnered 183 cosponsors. This Congress—we look forward to even more support. Together we can help millions of children and adults that suffer from these devastating diseases.

BIPARTISAN LEGISLATION INTRO-
DUCED TO HELP INCREASE EQ-
UITY INVESTMENT IN SMALL
BUSINESSES LOCATED IN LOW-
INCOME AREAS

HON. GWEN MOORE

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 10, 2005

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer legislation along with my colleague from Kentucky, Congressman HAROLD "HAL" ROGERS, which seeks to increase venture capital investment in small businesses located in low-income urban and rural communities nationwide. Our bill, the Securing Equity for the Economic Development of Low Income Areas—SEED—Act, would reauthorize and expand the New Markets Venture Capital (NMVC) program of the Small Business Administration (SBA).

The New Markets Venture Capital Program was established in 2000 for the purposes of making equity investments in small businesses located in economically distressed communities through the creation of NMVC companies. Many conventional venture capital firms have been unwilling to invest in economically disadvantaged areas. NMVC companies aim to help fill the access to capital gap that exists for many small firms in these communities.

New Market Venture Capital companies will leverage equity capital backed by SBA-guaranteed funds to invest in small businesses in depressed areas. NMVC companies can also apply for matching operational assistance grants to provide entrepreneurs with the services and technical support needed to help their businesses grow and succeed.

Through the program, 6 New Markets Venture Capital companies have been formed and are currently still operating and making quality investments in small businesses throughout the country. For example, the Southern Appalachian Fund located in Congressman ROGERS' Congressional District was one of the original New Markets Venture Capital companies established during the initial round of funding. The Southern Appalachian Fund (SAF) is a \$12.5 million venture capital fund offering equity capital and operational assistance to eligible small businesses located in the Appalachia regions of Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi. In 2004 alone, SAF invested over \$1 million in three companies, which helped attract an additional \$1.7 million in venture capital funding for these firms. As a result, these investments assisted in the creation of over 50 new jobs in the region.

Unfortunately, though authorized, this worthy program has not received funding in each of the last 3 fiscal years. The SEED Act would reauthorize the New Markets Venture Capital program by providing \$100 million in debt-guarantees and \$25 million in operational assistance grants to fund the creation of a fresh round of NMVC companies. In addition, our legislation would incorporate small manufacturers into the mission of the program by encouraging the SBA to set up at least one company that is primarily involved in the investment and development of small manufacturing firms. The bill also seeks to diversify venture capital investments beyond the typical Silicon Valley and Northeastern corridors by